2022 JAMES A.F. STEVENSON DISTINGUISHED LECTURE and RESEARCH DAY
Tuesday, November 1, 2022

9:30 a.m. Student Poster Presentations
Great Hall, Somerville House

2:00 p.m. Research Talks
McKellar Room, UCC 290

Sergiu Lucaciu, PhD Candidate
“Connexin Linked Skin Disorders: Filling in the Gaps”

Van Lu, PhD
“Use of intestinal organoid models to investigate mechanisms mediating gut-microbiota crosstalk”

James A.F. Stevenson Distinguished Lecture

Keynote Speaker:
Dr. Tak W. Mak
Professor of Medical Biophysics and Immunology at the University of Toronto, Director of the Campbell Family Institute for Breast Cancer Research at the Princess Margaret Hospital

“Future Anti-Cancer Therapeutics: Put the Cart Before the Horses”

Tak W. Mak is internationally known for his pioneering work on the genetics and molecular biology of cancer and the immune system. In 1984, his group cloned the gene encoding the human TCRβ chain, providing the basis for CAR-T treatment. His team also showed that CTLA4 negatively regulates T cell activation, paving the way for checkpoint inhibitor immunotherapy. Most recently, his team established that the brain communicates with the immune system via T and B cells producing acetylcholine.

In the biotech arena, Dr. Mak co-founded Agios Pharmaceuticals and Treadwell Therapeutics. These companies specialize in delineating metabolic vulnerabilities in tumour cells that can be exploited as novel cancer therapies. Two IDH inhibitors are now FDA-approved for AML treatment, and two first-in-class agents targeting aneuploidy in advanced tumours are now in phase II clinical trials. Dr. Mak has published over 950 peer-reviewed research papers, holds dozens of patents, and has won numerous awards.

Reception to follow – The Wave

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